



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

News Release

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ICE NABS SECOND GROUP OF GUYANESE ATTEMPTING TO ILLEGALLY ENTER THE UNITED STATES

Fajardo, Puerto Rico—Twenty-one illegal immigrants from Guyana who tried to enter the United States illegally were apprehended by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents today near the vicinity of Playa Lucia, in the municipality of Yabucoa, in eastern Puerto Rico.

The Guyanese were spotted by Puerto Rico Police Department marine enforcement officers at approximately 5 a.m. today when they attempted to land the fragile, yawl-type vessel in which they were traveling.

This is the second group of Guyanese to try to enter the United States illegally through the eastern coast of Puerto Rico in the last 30 days. On Nov. 23, 2005, ICE agents arrested 15 illegal immigrants from Guyana who claimed to be Canadian citizens and attempted to enter the United States through the small island of Culebra off the eastern coast of Puerto Rico.

“Trying to circumvent existing immigration laws to illegally enter the United States is a crime that we cannot tolerate,” said Lydia St. John-Mellado, acting special agent-in-charge of ICE in Puerto Rico. “ICE will continue to work with its Department of Homeland Security (DHS) partners and the Puerto Rico Police Department to halt illegal immigration to the United States through Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.”

The 21 illegal immigrants from Guyana, five females and 16 males, are in ICE custody and have been turned over to ICE detention and removal officers for their removal from the United States.

Disrupting and dismantling human smuggling and trafficking rings has been a top priority for ICE since the agency was established in March 2003, given the potential threat that these organizations pose both to national security and public safety. With ICE’s broad authorities for enforcing immigration and customs laws and its expertise in financial investigations, the agency is able to pursue human smuggling organizations more aggressively than ever before. As a result, ICE agents arrested more than 1,630 human smugglers nationwide in fiscal year 2004.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of four integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.